



English translation of Aitareya Upanishad

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Aitareya Upanishad

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Aitareya Upanishad

Part 1 – Chapter 1: The Creation of Virat

1

In the beginning all this verily was Atman only, one and without a second. There was nothing else that winked. He bethought Himself: "Let Me now create the worlds."

2

He created these worlds: Ambhah, the world of water-bearing clouds, Marichi, the world of the solar rays, Mara, the world of mortals and Ap, the world of waters. Yon is Ambhah, above heaven; heaven is its support. The Marichis are the interspace. Mara is the earth. What is underneath is Ap.

3

He bethought Himself: "Here now are the worlds. Let Me now create world-guardians." Right from the waters He drew forth the Person in the form of a lump and gave Him a shape.

4

He brooded over Him. From Him, so brooded over, the mouth was separated out, as with an egg; from the mouth, the organ of speech; from speech, fire, the controlling deity of the organ.
Then the nostrils were separated out; from the nostrils, the organ of breath; from breath, air, the controlling deity of the organ.
Then the eyes were separated out; from the eyes, the organ of sight; from sight, the sun, the controlling deity of the organ.
Then the ears were separated out; from the ears, the organ of hearing; from hearing, the quarters of space, the controlling deity of the organ.
Then the skin was separated out; from the skin, hairs, the organ of touch; from the hairs, plants and trees, air the controlling deity of the organs.
Then the heart was separated out; from the heart, the organ of the mind; from the mind, the moon, the controlling deity of the organ.
Then the navel was separated out; from the navel, the organ of the apana; from the apana, Death, Varuna, the controlling deity of the organ.
Then the virile member was separated out; from the virile member, semen, the organ of generation; from the semen, the waters, the controlling deity of the organ.

Part 1 – Chapter 2: Cosmic Powers in the Human Body

1

These deities, thus created, fell into this great ocean. He subjected the Person to hunger and thirst. They said to Him: "Find out for us an abode wherein being established we may eat food."

2-3

He brought them a cow. They said: "But this is not enough for us." He brought them a

horse. They said: "This, too, is not enough for us."

He brought them a person. The deities said: "Ah, this is well done, indeed." Therefore a person is verily something well done.

He said to the deities: "Now enter your respective abodes."

4

The deity fire became the organ of speech and entered the mouth. Air became breath and entered the nostrils. The sun became sight and entered the eyes; the quarters of space became hearing and entered the ears. Plants and trees, the deity of air, became hairs and entered the skin. The moon became the mind and entered the heart. Death became the apana and entered the navel. The waters became semen and entered the virile member.

5

Hunger and thirst said to the Creator: "For the two of us find an abode also." He said to them: "I assign the two of you to these deities; I make you co-sharers with them."

Therefore to whatsoever deity an oblation is made, hunger and thirst became sharers in it.

Part 1 – Chapter 3: The Embodiment of the Supreme Self

1

He bethought Himself: "Here now are the worlds and the world-guardians. Let Me create food for them."

2

He brooded over the waters. From the waters, thus brooded over, there emerged a condensed form. The form that so emerged is indeed food.

3

The food so created wished to flee away. He sought to grasp it with speech. But He was not able to grasp it with speech. If, indeed, He had grasped it with speech, one would then have been satisfied by merely uttering the word food

4–10

The Creator sought to grasp it with the breath. But He was not able to grasp it with the breath. If, indeed, He had grasped it with the breath, one would then have been satisfied by merely smelling food.

He sought to grasp it with the eye. But He was not able to grasp it with the eye.

If, indeed, He had grasped it with the eye, one would then have been satisfied by merely seeing food.

He sought to grasp it with the ear. But He was not able to grasp it with the ear.

If, indeed, He had grasped it with the ear, one would then have been satisfied by merely hearing of food.

He sought to grasp it with the skin. But He was not able to grasp it with the skin.

If, indeed, He had grasped it with the skin, one would then have been satisfied by merely touching food.

He sought to grasp it with the mind. But He was not able to grasp it with the mind.

If, indeed, He had grasped it with the mind, one would then have been satisfied by merely thinking of food.

He sought to grasp it with the virile member. But He was not able to grasp it with the virile member.

If, indeed, He had grasped it with the virile member, one would then have been satisfied by merely emitting food.

He sought to grasp it with the apana and He grasped it.

This grasper of food is what vayu, air or prana is. This vayu is what lives on food.

11

He bethought Himself: "How could this exist without Me?" Then He said to Himself: "Which way shall I enter it?" he said to Himself further: "If speech is uttered by the organ of speech, if smelling is done by the breath, seeing by the eyes, hearing by the ears, touching by the skin, thinking by the mind, eating by the apana and the emission of semen by the virile member, then who am I?"

12

So, piercing the end, the Lord entered through that door. That door is known as the vidriti, the cleft. This is the place of bliss.

Atman, thus embodied, has three abodes, three conditions of sleep. This is one abode, this is another, this is the third.

13

Having been born as the jiva, He realised the elements as one with Himself. What else here would one desire to speak about?

He perceived this very person as the all-pervading Brahman. He said: "Ah, I have seen It."

14

Therefore He is called Idandra. Idandra, indeed is His name. Him who is Idandra they call indirectly Indra. For the gods appear to be fond of cryptic epithets; yea, the gods appear to be fond of cryptic epithets.

Part 2 – Chapter 1: The Three Births of the Self

1

This person is, at first, the germ in a man. That which is the semen is here called the germ. This semen is the vigour drawn from all the limbs. The man bears the self in the self. When he pours the semen into a woman, he gives it a birth. This, indeed, is the first birth of the embodied soul.

2

That semen becomes one with the woman—just like a limb of her own. That is why it does not hurt her. She nourishes this self of his that has come into her.

3

She, being the nourisher, should be nourished. The woman nourishes the embryo. Immediately after its birth he nourishes the child, which in the beginning was already born. Nourishing the child from birth onward, he thus nourishes himself for the continuation of these worlds. For thus alone are these worlds perpetuated. This is one's second birth.

4

He who is the one self of his, is made his substitute for virtuous deeds. Then the other self of his, having accomplished his duties and reached his age departs. So departing hence, he is born again. This is the third birth.

5

About this a rishi has said:

"While still lying in the womb, I came to know all the births of the gods. A hundred strongholds, as if made of iron, confined me, yet I burst through them all swiftly, like a hawk."

Vamadeva spoke, in this wise, even while lying in the womb.

6

Thus endowed with Knowledge, he, becoming one with the Supreme Self and soaring aloft on the dissolution of the body, obtained all desires in the heavenly world and became immortal—yea, became immortal.

Part 3 – Chapter 1: Concerning the Self

1

Who is He whom we worship, thinking: "This is the Self"? Which one is the Self? Is it He by whom one sees form, by whom one hears sound and by whom one tastes the sweet and the unsweet?

2

Is it the heart and the mind. It is consciousness, lordship, knowledge, wisdom, retentive power of mind, sense knowledge, steadfastness, though, thoughtfulness, sorrow, memory, concepts, purpose, life, desire, longing: all these are but various names of Consciousness (Prajnanam).

3

He is Brahman, He is Indra, He is Prajapati; He is all these gods; He is the five great elements—earth, air, akasa, water, light; He is all these small creatures and the others which are mixed; He is the origin—those born of an egg, of a womb, of sweat and of a sprout; He is horses, cows, human beings, elephants—whatever breathes here, whether moving on legs or flying in the air or unmoving. All this is guided by Consciousness, is supported by Consciousness. The basis is Consciousness. Consciousness is Brahman.

4

He, having realised oneness with Pure Consciousness, soared from this world and having obtained all desires in yonder heavenly world, became immortal—yea, became immortal.

-- Aitareya Upanishad --